

## **Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, February 10, 2010 - 6PM-8PM

Seattle City Hall Boards and Commissions Room L280

### **1. Call to order and introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. SPAB members in attendance: Tom Williams (Chair), Christina Bollo, (Vice Chair), Vanessa Lund (Secretary), Mark Bandy, Celeste Gilman, Kristen Lohse, Jon Morgan, Benjamin Smith, Seth Schromen-Wawrin, Howard Wu, Evan Brown [Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board (SBAB) liaison to Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB)]

Staff and presenters: Kristin Dean, WSDOT SR 520 team; Brian DePlace, Seattle Department of Transportation; Brian Dougherty, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT staff liaison to SPAB); Gary Johnson, Seattle Department of Planning & Development; Jeff Kinney, WSDOT SR 520 team;

Members of the public in attendance: Devor Barton, Doug Beeman, Christine Cole, Ellen Milne, Jacob Struiksma, Charles Wilkinson.

### **2. Approval of minutes**

Tom asked for any additional comments or corrections to January's meeting minutes.

*ACTION: On a motion made by Mark Bandy, the January minutes were unanimously approved.*

### **3. Public comment**

Tom thanked the members of the public for attending and asked if there was any comment. Hearing none, the public comment period was closed.

### **4. Mobile and Sidewalk Food Vending Update**

Gary Johnson and Brian DePlace presented on city efforts to improve the street food scene by reforming city policies. Their work is part of a larger effort to support vibrant neighborhoods.

In the 1980's the city adopted regulations aimed at clamping down on an "out of control" situation. Since then, municipal code restrictions and health department policies have had an unintended consequence of severely limiting opportunities for mobile food units and food carts. Gary explained, "Now, sidewalk stuff is pretty much all hotdogs."

The purpose of the current effort is to "activate and enliven streets, displace illegal and negative street behavior." Citywide reforms being considered include diversifying types of food that can be sold from food carts; eliminating the required 200' setback for Parks property; setting a clear path of travel consistent with Pedestrian Master Plan guidelines; creating a street use permit for mobile trucks; setting standards for design, litter pickup and hours of operation; creating setbacks from restaurants and improving noticing requirements to the public and area businesses. Center city reforms being

considered include allowing mobile vending from the street and issuing an RFP for vendors at specific locations.

Highlights of Gary's and Brian's presentation included:

- The city will continue allowing sidewalk vending carts and will use their previous sidewalk café reform work as a model. Attention will be paid to ensuring a clear path of travel and appropriate setbacks.
- Under current policies, adjacent property owners have right to veto. "We're proposing to change to a 50' setback and have noticing requirements – but an adjacent store couldn't prevent a sidewalk cart."
- Bottom line for health department is food safety. The new approach is tiered system. Depending on potential hazard, requirements get stepped up. This would allow for a much broader variety of foods on sidewalk carts.
- Mobile food units are also being addressed. The health department has allowed a wider variety of options here. These units are treated as restaurants on wheels and tend to have more equipment available to them. However, there is a defacto ban on mobile units in some key downtown areas and around the stadiums. The policy being considered would effectively revoke this ban and assign some key locations where they will allow vending during certain days and hours.
- Another part of the process is working with county and city codes – again, using the sidewalk café reform model. For the food vending policies some attention will need to be paid to queueing policies – to make sure there's a clear path of travel.

SDOT's goal is to transmit legislation to City Council in March. This work is getting media attention and has been supported by Council member Clark. There has also been a good deal of outreach to the community.

Q&A:

Q: Can you provide an update on what was previously discussed at a previous presentation to SPAB?

A: *We are proposing to eliminate the ban on vending within 200 feet of a park and looking at how to address special areas like plazas. (Westlake was cited as an example.) We're looking at a different section in the code to deal with these areas.*

*We're also looking at placing utilities there so there is an option to do a kiosk or a more permanent structure or even an area where a mobile might drive in. Food sales would be used to activate an area.*

*There are still issues to be worked out with parks. Currently, if you're vending within a park, there's a percentage that goes back to the park. Our fee schedule works a little differently. Either you are a park or a street use. Parks have been supportive of dropping setback. But the fee issue hasn't been completely resolved.*

*For transit station and stop areas (such as along MLK) policies will largely depend upon who owns the property. Where SDOT is concerned, the department will review applications on a case by case basis. Some areas get so crowded – so it would be important not to interfere with access to transit.*

*Some policies will be addressed by the legislation and others will be handled via the director's rule. This allows for some discretion. In the director's rule, there are other criteria that apply – such as pedestrian volumes.*

Q: Is any attention being paid to trying to attract healthy foods such as banning sales of certain types of foods or soda?

*A: I don't see us wading into that one. I think we're trying to encourage variety of choices.*

Q: Will fees discourage activity? Are we going to offer fees that are similar to those charged in other places?

*A: We're hearing from a bunch of people about how important enforcement is. They don't want 'wildcatters' to show up and undercut them. The SDOT Street Use Inspectors aren't funded through the general fund. We operate based on permit fees. So we need to identify resources to fund an effective enforcement program. Whether this comes from increasing fees or providing some general fund support, I'm not sure. Some research is called for. It's a good point.*

Q: How will garbage collection and seating will be handled? Is there any possibility to channel some money for localized street improvements or sidewalk shimming on the block where some of the stuff happens?

*A: We are requiring that vendors either provide or identify receptacles. In terms of pruning, sidewalk, etc. there are legal issues around this (nexus). It gets a little difficult to move from administering permits. There is broader support for public realm improvements rather than tying it specifically to the street food initiative.*

Q: What are the revenue implications of the policies?

*A: The goal is to be revenue neutral.*

Q: Who sets the rates?

*A: For SDOT it would be approved by council and informed by calculations provided by the department.*

Q: What methodology is being used for designated spaces? How will you choose them? Would you use the Pedestrian Master Plan? Would SPAB have an opportunity for input?

*A: We need to find a place that will support the vending. It needs to have sufficient traffic, but we also want to be thoughtful about other conflicts and competition for space. We're open to input. Ultimately we'll do an analysis to see if a location is a good one. We'd follow the same rules that we're requiring of vendors. We don't have a precise methodology. We'll propose a few locations to test it.*

Q: Do you envision some downtown parking spaces that would be vacated?

*A: There may be mobile vending zones during certain hours and on certain days. (SPAB members discussed the challenge of managing demand for these spots and suggested looking at Pike Place market's approach to managing vendors.)*

Brian and Gary added that the devil is in the details on this work – for instance, they'll need to consider how to handle vendors who wish to drop off carts and how vendors would line up. Brian added, "Our goal is to encourage activity. We have to be careful to avoid unfunded mandates and we also want to be able to enforce policies."

## 5. WSDOT 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program Overview

Danielle Dunich introduced the presentation and explained that the purpose is to give a program overview, explain the design alternatives and discuss future trail activity.

The program consists of four projects – 1.) I-5 to Medina, 2) Medina to SR 202) The Lake Washington Congestion Management Project and 4) pontoon construction project. Currently, there is not full funding for the project. The bridge and HOV replacement is funded.

The presentation focused on the SR 520 corridor from I-5 to Medina. The WSDOT team reviewed the alternatives and SPAB members asked questions throughout.

Q: What is the grade separation on the bridge?

A: *Not certain. Can check on this.*

Q: What are the implications for sidewalks?

A: *There is better lane width and a new bike lane.*

Q: Wide lanes mean fast speeds. How will speed be managed?

A: *Posted signage and design*

Q: What's the need for a second bridge over the cut?

A: *Congestion relief, improving transit flow and arterial connections*

Q: What are the implications for transit?

A: *Transitions north to Sound Transit area*

Q: What is the reason for taking the transit stop off SR 520?

A: *During the mitigation process there was a common desire to narrow the highway. Center HOV lanes help do this. Transit stops will adjust to the configuration. Tolling will help pay for some transit improvements as part of the Urban Partnership Agreement. There were options on A that would give some limited bus access right at Montlake exchange. There was some connection provided.*

Q: Why do you need to continue to pursue K if it's not feasible because of environmental, tribal, cost and other issues?

A: *It's required as part of the process. I don't know that we've had anyone say it's DOA. There are questions and hurdles. There's no one who really said there's no way. Maybe it's a tall order. We have our environmental process schedule. The legislative work group last year asked WSDOT to work with agencies and communities and to work within a budget. If the Army Corps sees another alternative that is less damaging to the environment – they have said they'd have to pick that alternative. The SDEIS is happening on a parallel track as the political process.*

Q: Will the HOV be 3 or more people? Is there tolling in the models?

A: *Decisions are being made about how to handle HOVs and transit. These are not tolled in the model, but the decision hasn't been made yet.*

Q: What's the lane width for the pedestrian and bike lane?

A: *This is one combined lane on 520 - 14 feet, wider than what's provided on I-90.*

SPAB members discussed the width of the bridge (triple the current width), accessibility and convenience tradeoffs associated with ramps and steps (both are preferred) and traffic quieting measures.

Ben suggested having a sub group form to review the SDEIS, discuss the issues and help with potentially drafting a letter regarding SPAB's position.

The WSDOT team encouraged SPAB members to email, comment by snail mail or attend an upcoming open house.

- [SR520\\_SDEIS@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:SR520_SDEIS@wsdot.wa.gov) or [www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr520bridge](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr520bridge)
- The open house will be held at Lake Union Park Naval Reserve Building, 5-7 pm on February 23, 2010.

## **6. SPAB candidate recruitment**

There have been 39 applicants for three positions. Brian explained that it may take some time for the Mayor's office to proceed because of an overall backup on board appointments. Tom asked those with expiring terms (Howard and Celeste) to stay on the Board until replacements can be determined.

## **7. Other items**

Howard provided an update on the Bicycle Advisory Board.

- Last month, Council member Rasmussen (the new Transportation chair) met with SBAB and was very supportive of bike and pedestrian issues. (Tom added that he's working on having him at an SPAB meeting.)
- Commute Seattle presented to the group. They are assessing the bike infrastructure inventory to see where they can bring improvements and make the city more accommodating for cyclists.
- SDOT Bike Rack program was discussed. They shared information about the pilot project results on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The model will be implemented in other parts of the city.

Tom announced that next month's agenda will include a presentation on the Westlake hub project and a presentation about the Alaskan Way Viaduct.

Howard added that he will posted pictures from the open house on the SPAB yahoo site.

Jon announced that he is meeting with staff in Councilmember Harrell's office to talk about street lighting and would also like to get City Light to come to one of the SPAB meetings.

## **8. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

**The next Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2010, 6-8 PM.  
Seattle City Hall Boards and Commissions Room L280**